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FACT SHEET ON NEED FOR INCREASED HOME CANNING AND FREEZING OF CHICKEN

The Problem:

To increase home canning and freezing of chicken during the next 6 months — especially in July, August and September — when farmers will be culling and selling large numbers of chickens, to get rid of low-producers and loafer hens. Prospective heavy marketings in the third quarter will justify intensive efforts to encourage increased canning and freezing of chicken, thereby easing the difficulties of marketing seasonally heavy supplies.

Why Closer Culling:

Short feed supplies and egg marketing difficulties are causing many farmers to cull flocks more closely this year. The poultryman who looks to his profits can't afford to board non productive birds. Too, storage space and labor are scarce; crates, other containers, and shipping facilities are limited.

Chicken Dinners Next Winter:

Since the price of chicken is usually lowest during the summer and fall months, farmers, and city and town families in poultry-raising areas and in other localities where supplies will be plentiful should find it economical to preserve chicken against the days when it will be scarce. The total amount of chicken available for civilians this year is less than that of last year — 23.8 pounds per capita consumption in 1944 as compared with 28.1 pounds in 1943.

Killing and Dressing:

Whether you are canning or freezing chickens, slaughter and handle them in a thoroughly sanitary way. Here are pointers:

Feed the chickens only water for 12 hours before killing. Empty crops save feed and contribute to easier and more sanitary dressing. Bleed the chickens well, using either an inside or outside cut. Scald with water that has just begun to simmer (170° to 180° F.) Scald only long enough to pull out feathers easily, or semi scald in water 125° to 128° F. for 15 seconds to 1 minute according to age of bird. After picking, chill the chickens thoroughly in ice water, cold running water, or dry cool at as near 32° F. as possible, but do not freeze. When cooled, dry them and singe.

Draw the bird. Remove head, feet at hock joints, crop, windpipe, lungs, entrails, gall bladder, and oil gland. Special care should be taken not to break the gall bladder. Remove eggs, if any. These are good to eat, but not good for canning or freezing. Clean and wash giblets and carcass thoroughly.

Freezing:

Freezing is an excellent way to preserve poultry meat for a few weeks or for a year, or longer. Most families prefer to use available freezer space for storing their frying and roasting chickens, canning the older, less tender, stewing fowls.

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Poultry for freezing should be fresh and well-cleaned. Chill at 33° to 40° F. Wrap the chilled poultry tightly in moisture-proof, vapor-proof paper and freeze promptly, at below zero temperature. Store at uniform near zero temperature. Thawed poultry resembles the fresh product and is cooked in the same manner. Cook thawed poultry promptly.

Community Canning Centers:

Community canning centers offer good facilities for chicken canning, especially to homemakers who have no pressure canner or who have large quantities of chicken to put up when the flock is culled.

In some community canneries, chickens may be slaughtered and chilled, but most canneries require that they be dressed and cooled before they're brought in for canning. It's best to arrange with the local supervisor of the cannery before slaughtering chickens to make sure that facilities will be available when needed.

If the community cannery has no directions for canning chicken, these may be obtained by writing to the Office of Distribution, War Food Administration, Washington 25, D. C.

HOME CANNING

Can the Old Hens:

Loafer hens, culled from the flock when they're 1 to 2 years old, are best for canning. Young birds don't can so well. The meat has to be processed just as long as does meat from older birds, and this cooks young chickens to pieces. Can only meat from healthy birds in tip-top condition.

For canning chicken use a steam pressure canner. To process chicken safely in reasonable time requires a temperature of 250° F. — far higher than the boiling point. The only way to get this high temperature is to hold steam under pressure.

Get Chicken Ready:

Dress chickens as for cooking. Don't break gall bladder as this will spoil flavor of chicken by making it bitter. Remove lungs, kidneys, oil gland, and eggs, if any. Wash the bird and cut into usual serving pieces. Remove skin or not, as you wish. Trim off lumps of fat, leaving only enough for flavor. Too much fat in the jar may cook out onto rubber ring and spoil the seal. Sort chicken into three piles:

(1) Meaty pieces, such as breasts, thighs, legs, upper wing joints. These may be canned with or without the bone. Canned with the bone, chicken takes less time to process and has added flavor.

(2) Bony pieces, such as backs, wings, necks, and perhaps feet after they've been skinned. Because there's relatively little meat on the bony pieces, it's best to strip meat from bones and can it covered with broth.

(3) Giblets. Can giblets separately. If canned with other meat, giblets will darken it.

Precook:

Chicken with bone. -- Precook meaty pieces in kettle on stove. Put meat into boiling water, lower heat, and simmer until raw color is nearly gone from center of pieces; about 8 to 10 minutes.

Chicken without bone. -- Precook chicken pieces by simmering in water just long enough so that meat may be cut from bone. Cut off meat; reheat.

Giblets. -- Can livers alone, gizzards and heart together. Precook by simmering in a little water, as for chicken with bone.

NOTE: Don't fry chicken to be canned. The brown crust that tastes so good when you eat the cooked meat fresh becomes dry and hard, and may even give the canned meat a disagreeable flavor.

Equipment:

Glass jars are preferred because chicken discolors tin cans and sometimes takes a dark deposit from the metal. Use quart- or pint-size jars, none larger. Have jars clean and hot.

Best for chicken canning are utensils of enamelware, aluminum, stainless steel, or tinware. Don't use iron or copper, for these may discolor canned chicken. Don't cook or let chicken stand in galvanized iron tubs or pails.

If possible use enamel trays or big platters to keep meat from direct contact with wood or linoleum surfaces.

Have all equipment thoroughly clean.

Pack:

Have jars and chicken boiling hot. If salt is desired, put it in the bottom of each jar, 1/2 of a level teaspoonful to a pint jar; 1 level teaspoonful to a quart jar.

Work briskly. Pack chicken to 1/2 inch of top. Be sure broth covers meat. Work out air bubbles with a knife. Use a clean, damp cloth to wipe the rubber ring or sealing edge clean. Grease or bits of meat will keep a lid from making a tight seal. Adjust jar lid as each kind requires.

Into Canner:

Follow the manufacturer's directions for your own canner -- especially for a war-time model. Here are general pointers:

Before you put in jars, have 2 or 3 inches of boiling water in canner, so it won't boil dry and be damaged.

Place hot-filled jars on rack. Don't let them touch or tip over. Steam must flow around and over each jar.

Fasten canner cover securely so that no steam escapes except at the open pet cock. Watch until steam pours steadily from pet cock or weighted-gage opening. Let it pour 10 minutes or more, so all air is driven from canner, leaving only steam inside. Then close pet cock or put on the weighted gage and let pressure rise to 15 pounds.

Start to count processing time the moment right pressure is reached. For correct processing times, see canning table given below. If you live at an altitude of 2,000 feet or more, you will have to use more pressure. For each 1,000 feet above sea level, add 1 pound of pressure.

Length of Time to Process:

	<u>Pints</u> <u>Minutes</u>	<u>Quarts</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Chicken with bone.....	65	75
Chicken without bone.....	85	120
Giblets.....	85	-

Time's Up:

When time's up, slide canner away from heat. Let pressure return to zero on dial-type gage, wait a minute or two, then slowly open pet cock. Waiting longer may make it hard to get lid off. Then unfasten cover and tilt the far side up so that the steam escapes away from you.

Out of Canner:

As you take jars from canner complete seal at once on jars that are not self-adjusting. Cool jars right side up, away from drafts.

Store Right:

Store canned foods where it's cool...dry...dark.

Bulletins:

"Poultry Cooking" -- (Farmers' Bulletin No. 1888)

"Freezing Meat and Poultry for Home Use" -- (AWI-75)

Above are available from Office of Information, U.S.D.A., Washington 25, D.C. and Regional Marketing Reports Divisions, Office of Distribution, War Food Administration at the following addresses:

821 Market Street
San Francisco 3, California

5 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago 3, Illinois

425 Wilson Building
Dallas 1, Texas

Western Union Building
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150 Broadway
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